

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of claims**

1. (currently amended) A method for sterilizing and producing a fish-paste product by utilizing ozone gas-containing microbubbles comprising the steps of:

adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles generated in water to raw materials of a fish-paste product [[,]];

coating the interfaces of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles with tissues composed of raw materials of the fish-paste product, the raw materials including protein and lipid contained in the fish-paste product, thereby maintaining the longevity of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles thereby creating coating shells composed of said tissues, said shells covering the ozone gas-containing microbubbles~~[[,]]~~; and

giving stimulation to a part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles thereby rupturing the coating shells of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles while said ozone gas-containing microbubbles are in the fish-paste product, thereby sterilizing the fish-paste product by the formation of active oxygen and free-radical species;

wherein the ozone gas-containing microbubbles have a diameter of 50  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.

2. (previously presented) A germ-free anti-bacterial fish-paste product obtained by the sterilizing production method described in Claim 1.

3. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises adding water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

Claim 4 (canceled)

5. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises spray a mist of water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

Claims 6-8 (canceled)

9. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises rubbing together raw materials of the fish-paste products at the time of pestling of the raw materials.

Claim 10 (canceled)

11. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises high-frequency irradiation of raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 12 (canceled)

13. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises microwave irradiation of raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 14 (canceled)

15. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises heating raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 16 (canceled)

17. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein in the step of giving stimulation to a part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles is repeated after processing and packaging the fish-paste product.

Claim 18 (canceled)

19. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of giving stimulation to a part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles does not rupture all of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

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